

FAUQUIER COUNTY OFFICE OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

FY 2003 BUDGET AMENDMENT PROPOSAL NEW PERSONNEL STAFFING INITIATIVE DEPARTMENT REALIGNMENT AND NAME CHANGE



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EMERGENCY SERVICES COORDINATOR

April 22, 2002

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Preface

This proposal package includes supporting documentation to enhance the career fire and rescue services for Fauquier County. The contents herein, are a culmination of several years of studies, Task Force meetings and surveys comparing neighboring departments' recruitment and retention practices. The real heart of the matter is simple attrition where this agency has been the proving grounds for other fire and rescue departments to reap the benefits of our training and development of emergency services personnel.

Summary of Objectives

1. Hire two additional personnel to staff Marshall Fire Department and Marshall Rescue Squad. Presently, there are two personnel at The Plains Fire and Rescue station.
2. Improve staffing times from 10 hours per day to 12 hours per day (6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.).
3. Provide staffing on the "observed" holidays.
4. Migrate from the 50 hour work week to a 42 hour work week and create a "comparable" schedule where each employee works 4 days one week and 3 days the next or 84 hours each two week pay period.
5. Adjust the job requirements so Advanced Life Support certification is not required of EVERY employee. Experienced firefighter-driver-operators are needed in a limited quantity. In doing this, create an ALS Incentive program.
6. Propose a budget, which will support the above objectives.
7. Establish a CIP program to replace vehicles in the current fleet.



Fauquier County Fire, Rescue, and Emergency Services

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William Grimsley, President
Fire and Rescue Association

January 2, 2002

Employee Retention Initiative-Long Range Growth Plan Addendum to FY03 Budget Request

Background:

Since the inception of the Office of Emergency Services, employee retention and recruitment has been a significant problem, so much so that keeping all positions filled has been rare. In 1999, an Emergency Services Task Force was established to examine this matter. Several areas were addressed to include an immediate pay increase as well as the establishment of a new career rank ladder. I am proud to report that we have had a full staff since November of 2000. While this is a significant achievement, our group, which is now very functional after extreme measures in training and development, is being recruited by neighboring jurisdictions. Most of our employees are willing to stay for the benefit of the department as a whole, hoping for improved working conditions. This demonstrates great pride and dedication; however, I feel we need to take further measures to retain this current group.

Research:

Several months ago, our Human Resources staff examined competitive salaries in conjunction with work shifts. While abiding by our mission of "growth within our budgetary constraints", I would like to report the following findings and recommendations:

- Our starting pay is basically in line or slightly behind several of our comparatives, however other departments increase their employees salaries more rapidly.
- Pay incentives are provided by our competitive agencies in the areas of specialization such as advanced life support, hazardous materials technician, etc.
- Work Shifts: We currently work the longest workweek of daytime departments, making our hourly rates the lowest. Prince William County works a 12-hour shift four days per week (48 hours). We have found that this is the least liked shift of all. In my opinion, the best daytime shift for service delivery and employee conditions is the 12 hour – 42 hour workweek. Loudoun County recently adopted this schedule with much success

- Our Promotional Advancement (career rank structure) opportunities are excellent to the point of being a good recruitment tool. However, the requirements need to be slightly adjusted so that Paramedics and Engine Operators may individually advance in rank to a limited degree. Currently, the job descriptions require everyone to be a paramedic. This discourages EMT-Engine/Operators from applying, and not all paramedics will be good Engine Operators.
- Pay Incentives are our most significant difference as compared to our neighboring jurisdictions. For example, Prince William County gives a \$6000.00 pay incentive to personnel when they complete their paramedic certification.

Proposal:

Starting with the FY03 budget, implement an Advanced Life Support pay incentive program, which is “flat fee”, based so the overall cost will not compound. Intermediate Paramedics would receive \$1500, while National Registry Paramedics would receive \$2000. These incentives will be added to the salaries after merit increases and/or promotions so the amount will never increase. The total cost requested in the FY03 budget for this incentive is \$29,500. This will only increase as employees improve their certification, or we add personnel.

As mentioned above, while operating within our budget constraints, move our staffed stations to a 12 hour coverage from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. This allows our personnel to work a 42 hour week. One additional employee per station is required to accomplish this objective. The following is a proposed schedule of staffing priorities pending budgetary allowances:

- FY03 add two personnel, staff Warrenton RS and Remington FR 12 hours
- The Plains/Marshall would be the next priority followed by Catlett, New Baltimore and then the Response units. After that, I hope to add more personnel north so that The Plains and Marshall each have personnel assigned to their stations five days per week. The timeline of this objective will depend upon the revenue generated by the tax levy.

Summary

It is my intention to maintain the core group that we currently have by improving employee compensation and working conditions. My justification is that we are far better off having fewer employees who are well trained and experienced than to continue to increase our numbers only to have constant vacancies etc. In short, quality will better serve us over quantity.

Proposed Staffing Explanation

April 23, 2002

Based on the new budget formula of 2.5 times the current value of one penny's revenue, the following is an explanation of staffing with ALL employees working a 42 hour workweek. This will require filling five new positions.

Each of the following stations will be staffed with two personnel, 12 hours/day (6 a.m. – 6 p.m.) Monday – Friday and on at least six of the “observed” holidays:

The Plains Fire and Rescue
Warrenton Rescue Squad
Remington Fire and Rescue

This staffing schedule is facilitated by assigning three personnel to each of these stations. Each employee will work four days one week and three days the second week to average 84 hours each two week pay period. This initiative will require three of the five new positions.

The three supervisor/response units will be staffed 10 ½ hours per day, five days per week, but stagger the shift times so there is always a supervisor on duty between 6 a.m. and 6 p.m. This will be accomplished by assigning four personnel (lieutenants) to this rotation. This configuration also establishes a one person overstaffing one day per week to cover a vacancy, leave or to work on special projects such as training or strategic preplanning. As mentioned above, one lieutenant position will need to be added by promotion.

Each of the following stations will be staffed with 2 personnel 10 ½ hours per day, four days per week:

Marshall FD/Marshall RS
New Baltimore FR
Catlett FD/Cedar Run

Each of these stations will have 2 personnel assigned. One day per week, on a rotating basis, one of these three stations will be unstaffed. This will place all employees on the same pay schedule, improve recruitment/retention and still provide an improved coverage plan from what we currently have today. This initiative will require two of the five new positions. Regarding holidays, these stations' personnel will follow the normal county holiday schedule. As the budget revenue grows in the future, one additional employee will be added to these stations to facilitate a 12 hour shift rotation.

Department Name Change

In order to initiate the new staffing and work schedule changes along with the new salary scales for employees engaged in “fire protection services”, as of December 1999, the United States Department of Labor requires our agency to meet four elements as follows:

1. The employer must be an organized fire department or fire protection district.
2. The employees have been trained to the extent required by State statute or local ordinance, (i.e.: Firefighter I, II).
3. The employees have the legal authority and responsibility to engage in the prevention, control or extinguishment of a fire of any type.
4. The employee performs activities which are required for, and directly concerned with, the prevention, control or extinguishment of fires, including such incidental non-firefighting functions as housekeeping, equipment maintenance, lecturing, attending community fire drills and inspecting homes and schools for fire hazards.

The December 1999 ruling states that the above-mentioned requirements apply to employees who are assigned to EMS Units as well, where they have the expectation to engage in “fire protection” activities.

The following section is from the Code of Virginia:

Virginia Code 27-6.1 Establishment of fire department; chief, officers and employees. – The governing body of any city, town or county may establish as a department of government a fire department and may designate it by any name consistent with the names of its other governmental units. The head of such fire department shall be known as “the chief.” As many other officers and employees may be employed in such fire department as the governing body may approve.

Pursuant to the above regulations and the Code of Virginia, and being consistent with numerous other counties similar to ours, the county has determined that the **Fauquier County Office of Emergency Services designation shall be changed to the Fauquier County Department of Fire and Rescue Services; and that the current title of Emergency Services Coordinator, as prescribed in the county job description, shall be changed to the title of Chief.**

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia title 44-146.19, the County Administrator shall remain the designated Director of Emergency Services and the Chief of the Fauquier County Fire and Rescue Services shall remain the designated Emergency Services Coordinator, which applies to the maintenance of disaster plans and coordinating disaster relief.



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William Grimsley, President
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April 12, 2002

MEMORANDUM

To: Tony Hooper, Assistant County Administrator

From: Butch Grimsley, President

Subject: New Staffing Plan for the OES Career Personnel

I am writing this memo to confirm the Fire and Rescue Association's endorsement of the proposed staffing plan changes. My understanding of the new plan is as follows:

- Stations 4, 6, and 2 will be staffed with two career personnel Monday – Friday 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. including the “observed” holidays such as Presidents, Columbus Days etc.
- Stations 3/9, 10, and 7/12 will be staffed 10.5 hours four days per week with the alternating unstaffed day being Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. These stations will move to 12 hour staffing, as the OES budget will allow in the future.
- The three response/supervisor units will also be on a 10.5 hour shift, but the priority will be to staff stations when there is a personnel shortage due to leave.

The overall change will expand coverage by two hours per day as well as geographically. I also foresee a marked improvement in recruitment and retention of our career personnel.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

Job Description/Requirements Amendment

Since the inception of the career program, the job requirements have included Advanced Life Support certifications. This was based largely on the needs assessment of daytime vulnerabilities. Since 1992, the need for Fire Engine Driver/Operators has steadily increased, as have the value of the Fire Engines and the skill requirements of the operator. Therefore, to recruit experienced Engine Operators, I am requesting the approval of the job description amendments where the fire rescue technician may advance in rank while specializing in either Advanced Life Support or Driver/Operator. Of course, we will always encourage and support the cross training of every employee to obtain all skills.

Advanced Life Support Incentive

In an effort to promote the advanced life support (ALS) certification, and being consistent with competitive jurisdictions, I am requesting the approval of an ALS Incentive program where our employees receive a flat fee of \$1500 for the Intermediate Paramedic and \$2000 for the National Registry Paramedic certification. This amount is added to the salaries separately and after any merit or promotional increases, so the total amount does not compound or increase except by adding new employees to the list. A sample salary computation form is attached for your reference.

Amended Budget Proposal

Please reference the excel spreadsheet file attachment. (For county administration purposes only)

**Office of Emergency Services
Salary Computation Form**

Date: ____/____/____

Current Grade/Salary	OES Technician I 24 / \$31,030
Pay Incentive Code*	Code 2 (NREMT-P) 2000
Adjusted Salary	\$33030

Hourly Rate: Current Salary \$31,030 / 2184 hours = \$14.21

Overtime Rate: \$14.21 x 1.5 = \$21.32

**Pay Incentive Codes:*

Code 1: EMT-I or EMT-C = \$1500

Code 2: NREMT-P = \$2000

NEW SALARY EFFECTIVE ____/____/____

A. Promotion Calculation: From Grade ____ to Grade ____

Current Salary \$_____ x Promotion %_____ = \$_____

B. Merit/Cola Increase Calculation:

Current or Promotion Salary \$_____ x Merit/Cola % _____ = \$_____

C. New Current Salary **A** or **B** : \$_____

D. ALS Incentive Code/Amount: ____/\$_____

E. Adjusted Salary (**C + D**) = \$_____

New Hourly Rate: (**C divided by 2184 hours**) = \$_____

Overtime Rate: (**New Hourly Rate x 1.5**) \$_____